

## Message Text

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SUBJ: MEETINGS WITH GROMYKO: THE PROSPECT

1. SUMMARY. GROMYKO WILL BE LOOKING FOR SIGNS THAT REAL PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE IN A NUMBER OF HIGH PRIORITY FIELDS. SALT AND THE MIDDLE EAST WILL BE THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION. THE GRAINS/PETROLEUM NEXUS MAY ALSO BE CONSIDERED. SALT OBVIOUSLY HAS TOP PRIORITY, AND UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON'S VISIT HERE WILL HAVE CLARIFIED POSSIBILITIES FOR GRAIN AND OIL. THE SOVIET APPROACH TO THE MIDDLE EAST, HOWEVER, IS STILL BOTH OBSCURE AND WORRISOME. GROMYKO WILL NO DOUBT EXPRESS IRRITATION ABOUT SINAI II (INCLUDING ITS PROVISIONS FOR U.S. TECHNICIANS) AND INSIST THAT THE SOVIETS BE INCLUDED IN FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS, EVEN IF GENEVA IS NO LONGER THEIR PREFERRED NEXT STEP. IF GROMYKO IS ABLE TO REPORT SOLID PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS IN THESE THREE AREAS, THE LEADERSHIP SHOULD JUDGE IT CAN HOLD THE DETENTE BANNER HIGH AT LEAST THROUGH THE CONGRESS.

2. IF NOT, THE SOVIETS ARE LIABLE TO BECOME INCREASINGLY DEFENSIVE IN COMING MONTHS, SINCE THERE HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTING DEVELOPMENTS IN MANY FIELDS WHICH SEEMED HIGHLY PROMISING IN THE SPRING: SALT, CSCE, THE MIDDLE EAST, ASIA, PORTUGAL, INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS. AND, IF NO DEMONSTRABLE PROGRESS IN SOME MAJOR AREAS CAN BE REGISTERED BY YEAR'S END, GENERAL DEFENSIVENESS COULD SPREAD TO THE POINT WHERE THE SOVIETS ARE MAKING MORE TROUBLE IN SOME PLACES AND ARE LESS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE IN GENERAL. THEY WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO RENOUNCE DETENTE AS SUCH, BUT A GENERAL SLOWDOWN

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COULD TURN IT INTO SOMETHING WITHOUT MUCH CONTENT. END SUMMARY.

3. GROMYKO WILL BE LOOKING FOR SIGNS THAT REAL PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE IN A NUMBER OF HIGH-PRIORITY FIELDS. THE ROSY FOREIGN POLICY PROSPECTS WHICH BUOYED THE SOVIETS OVER THE TRADE/EMIGRATION BREAKDOWN INTO A MOOD OF OPTIMISM LAST SPRING ARE FADING, BUT WE WOULD EXPECT THEM TO RESPOND TO IMMEDIATE DIFFICULTIES IN WAYS WHICH WILL NOT PUT THE GENERAL DETNETE LINE AT RISK. THEREFORE, THE PROSPECT IS FOR DIFFERENTIATION--AND A WILLINGNESS TO BARGAIN HARD IN SPECIFIC FIELDS--RAHTER THAN FOR REVERSAL OF THE SOVIET APPROACH TO DETENTE.

4. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT GROMYKO WILL WISH TO CONCENTRATE ON SALT (WITH ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT) AND THE MIDDLE EAST. THE GRAIN-PETROLEUM QUESTION MAY WELL COME UP; WE DOUBT THAT GROMYKO WOULD WISH TO GET INVOLVED IN THE DETAILS, BUT THE OPPORTUNITY SHOULD BE TAKEN TO REINFORCE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OUR POSITIONS ON THE SUBJECT AS EXPRESSED BY UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON IN MOSCOW. A GOOD PROSPECT FOR A SALT II AGREEMENT HAS BECOME ALMOST THE SINE QUA NON FOR PROGRESS IN ALL AREAS. IT IS WITH REGARD TO THE MIDDLE EAST THAT THE SOVIET POSITION IS MOST OBSCURE AND TO SOME EXTENT MOST WORRISOME. THEY OBVIOUSLY FIND FEW REDEEMING VIRTURES IN THE MIDDLE EAST STATE OF PLAY AFTER SINAI II, AND ARE VERY UNHAPPY WITH THEIR OWN EXCLUSION FROM THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS WHICH THIS LATEST SUCCESS FOR U.S. SOLO MEDIATION REGISTERS AGAIN. GROMYKO IS THEREFORE LIKELY TO EXPRESS CONSIDERABLE IRRITATION OVER SINAI II AND TO FOCUS INTER ALIA ON THE ROLE FORESEEN FOR U.S. TECHNICIANS. HE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY INSIST THAT THE SOVIETS BE INCLUDED IN FUTURE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS. CONTINUING EXCLUSION FROM THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS INCREASINGLY THREATENS SOVIET INFLUENCE IN A THIRD AREA WHERE THEY HAVE A LARGE INVESTMENT OF TWENTY YEARS' STANDING, AND THE TEMPTATION TO PLAY AN UNCONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IF NO OTHER ROLE SEEMS POSSIBLE WILL HAVE BEEN HEIGHTENED BY SINAI II. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN DOWNPLAYING THE GENEVA FORUM RECENTLY, AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY ARE READY TO ENVISAGE PARTICIPATION IN LESS GENERAL AND LESS EXALTED EFFORTS, LIKE GOLAN NEGOTIATIONS, SO LONG AS THEY HAVE A GENUINE ROLE TO PLAY.

5. IF GROMYKO IS ABLE TO REPORT THAT THERE ARE ENHANCED PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS IN SALT AND THE MIDDLE EAST, AND IF A SATISFACTORY

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GRAIN AGREEMENT IS REACHED, WE BELIEVE THE LEADERSHIP WILL JUDGE THAT THEY CAN GET THROUGH THE 25TH CPSU CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY WITH THE DETENTE BANNER FLYING HIGH.

6. IF DEMONSTRABLE PROGRESS IS NOT IN THE CARDS, HOWEVER, THE SOVIETS ARE LIKELY TO BECOME INCREASINGLY DEFENSIVE IN COMING MONTHS. IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED A SERIES OF COLD DOUCHES IN THE FOREIGN POLICY FIELD WHICH HAS TAKEN THE

BLOOM OFF THE ROSES OF EARLY 1975. IT HAS BEEN HARDER THAN EXPECTED TO ENGINEER A CRESCENDO OF SUMMITS AND AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. AND THE WESTERN EUROPEANS: TRANSLATING VLADIVOSTOK INTO A SALT AGREEMENT HAS PROVED LABORIOUS, AND CSCE HAS BEEN GREETED BY BACKLASH RATHER THAN EUPHORIA IN THE WEST. IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THE SECRETARY HAS TURNED APPARENT FAILURE INTO REAL SUCCESS; IN ASIA THE FALL OF INDOCHINA HAS LAUNCHED THE U.S.S.R. INTO HEIGHTENED COMPETITION WITH THE CHINESE WITH ITS POSITION IN THE SUBCONTINENT MORE FRAGILE AND ITS POSITION VIS-A-VIS JAPAN SLIPPING; IN PORTUGAL, THE TIDE HAS TURNED AGAINST THE PROSPECT OF AN ALMOST COST-FREE GAIN IN SOUTHWESTERN EUROPE (AND NATO). THE PROJECTED EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONFERENCE HAS RUN INTO SNAGS. FINALLY, GRAIN SHORTFALLS HAVE CAST A BRIGHT SPOTLIGHT ON A MAJOR STRUCTURAL WEAKNESS OF THE SOVIET SYSTEM, AND GRAIN PURCHASES WILL DRAIN AWAY THE HARD CURRENCY WHICH SUPPORTED SOVIET BARGAINING POWER IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEALINGS. NO SINGLE SPRINGTIME PROSPECT PROMISED A DECISIVE FAVORABLE CHANGE IN THE "WORLD CORRELATION OF FORCES," BUT TAKEN TOGETHER THE HAPPY AUGURIES GAVE THE LEADERSHIP EVERY EXCUSE FOR SATISFACTION AND MUCH CAUSE FOR HOPE WHEN THE DATE WAS SET FOR THE 25TH CONGRESS. THUS, THE REVERSES OF LATE SUMMER CAN ONLY CAST A PALL OVER THE WHOLE SOVIET OUTLOOK, AND WITH PRE-CONGRESS PREPARATIONS SWITCHING INTO HIGH GEAR THE PROSPECTS MUST NECESSARILY BE DISCOURAGING, EVEN IF THE REVERSES CAN BE RECOUPED OVER TIME.

7. IF NO DEMONSTRABLE PROGRESS IN HIGH-PRIORITY FIELDS CAN BE REGISTERED BY YEAR'S END, THEREFORE, GENERAL DEFENSIVENESS COULD WELL SPREAD THROUGH THE POLICY DECISION APPARATUS TO THE POINT WHERE THE SOVIETS ARE MAKING MORE TROUBLE FOR US IN SOME PLACES AND ARE LESS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE ALMOST EVERYWHERE. DETENTE AS A GENERAL LINE HAS TREMENDOUS MOMENTUM HERE, AND THE BASIC FACTORS UNDERLYING IT STILL HAVE VALIDITY FROM THE SOVIET SECRET

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POINT OF VIEW. BUT A GENERAL SLOWDOWN WHICH TURNS DETENTE INTO SOMETHING VERY LIKE A ONE-WAY STREET WOULD BE CONCEIVABLE. IN THIS LIGHT, THE MEETINGS WITH GROMYKO ARE POSSIBLY THE MOST IMPORTANT WE WILL HAVE HAD SINCE THE SUMMIT MEETING IN VLADIVOSTOK. STOESSEL

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